United Nations A/C.1/54/PV.8

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

First Committee
8th Meeting
Friday, 15 October 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Luck (Australia): At the outset, Sir, may I express the Australian delegation's congratulations on your appointment to the chairmanship of the Committee as well as our best wishes in your endeavours to guide us in our work.

We look forward to this annual opportunity to evaluate ideas and proposals about how, collectively, we might address the enduring task of enhancing peace and security in an evolving international security environment. Inevitably, much of our attention is centred on elements of the international security system, painstakingly constructed over many years, in the fields of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control.

That system is part of the essential backdrop against which contemporary and immediate challenges are played out. These of course include efforts to resolve the East Timor issue, including the United Nations mandated multinational force which is restoring peace and security in East Timor. Australia, for one, is enormously appreciative of the diverse capacities shown by the United Nations in East Timor, not only in the restoration of peace and order, but also in addressing pressing humanitarian need.

For Australia the essential test of the value of multilateral instruments and proposals in the international security field is their capacity to enhance, in tangible ways, our own security as well as global and regional security. Australia's security is determined in significant part through the strength of these multilateral arrangements, as well as our defence capabilities, alliances and regional partnerships, and international diplomacy, together with the strength of our economy and trade linkages. This is perhaps little different from the approach of many countries represented here. While some emphasize the economic and developmental benefits to be gained through multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament instruments, the bottom line for most is a calculation about the respective security benefits.

The task of weighing and assessing these benefits has not been made any easier over the past year or so by a complex and challenging international environment. The recent period has seen a marked easing of the pace of a number of key multilateral and bilateral negotiations in the wake of the boom period immediately following the end of the cold war. The international environment has been clouded by renewed tensions within countries, as well as between countries, often with a strong ethnic or religious component, and disastrous humanitarian consequences to which the international community has been compelled to respond. This has presented fresh challenges to the United Nations itself in determining how the Organization should act in the face of humanitarian crises, knowing that to ignore them is simply untenable, not to say immoral. The recent period has seen a number of challenges to international non-proliferation norms and disarmament aspirations. The immediate consequence has been a heightened risk to both the regional and international security environment and a fuelling of regional arms competition and proliferation pressures.

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The conclusion Australia draws from this broad and troubling picture is that there is still much to be done to constrain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and prosecute long-standing disarmament goals, including the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. For us these challenges underscore and reinforce the value of the existing international security system, designed as it is to allow countries to address their security needs with the lowest practical level of armaments and, most important, without acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. But it is also a reminder of unfinished business; of the priorities identified in the 1995 statement of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament at the time of the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Nuclear testing in South Asia last year underlines the continuing need to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. We urge all those that have yet to sign and ratify the Treaty to do so forthwith. Australia was deeply disappointed and concerned by the decision of the United States Senate to vote down United States ratification of the Treaty. We urge the United States Administration to continue efforts to build support for the Treaty in order to enable early United States ratification of this important instrument and encourage other countries among the 44 required to ratify before the Treaty enters into force to do so quickly. The article XIV Conference held in Vienna last week underscored the determination of States ratifiers, Australia among them, and signatories to work towards early entry into force.

Another clear priority, acknowledged as such repeatedly by the international community, is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We will do all we can in the context of getting the Conference on Disarmament down to work to ensure the earliest possible commencement of those negotiations.

In the nuclear field these two treaties are crying out for attention. Both can bring early security benefits to all members of this body and are practical steps towards disarmament. We need to be realistic, however, in assessing what is worth while, what is achievable — in both the near term and the long term — and what benefits might be expected from particular measures or agreements. The CTBT will make a vital contribution to advancing nuclear disarmament by constraining the qualitative improvement in nuclear weapons. But it will not of itself bring about nuclear disarmament. An FMCT would provide valuable security benefits to both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. By capping the quantitative development of nuclear arsenals — a commitment which all the nuclear-weapon States are evidently prepared to make — it would be an essential step in the process of nuclear disarmament and one which should be seized upon urgently.

But it is not realistic to overload our expectations of an FMCT by insisting on its coverage of fissile material stocks, thus ensuring, de facto, that the FMCT becomes a negotiation about nuclear arsenals themselves. As desirable as this may appear, it is simply not realistic. Too often in the field of multilateral disarmament our endeavours are burdened with unrealistic expectations, sometimes by those least attracted to the proposals in question, with the result that attainable progress and practical advances are thwarted. It remains a reality — building on the evident progress that has already been achieved in nuclear disarmament — that the business of reducing nuclear arsenals will require a determined, and inevitably long-term, negotiation, essentially among the possessors of those arsenals. Those of us most intent on playing a supporting role can best advance this process through pushing ahead on the unfinished business of the CTBT and the FMCT.

The next major event on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament calendar is the NPT Review Conference next year. We appreciate that there are different interpretations of how best to achieve the NPT's objectives, but we must keep within our sights the vital security benefits the Treaty delivers. It will be important to foster an acute appreciation of the value of all the elements of the Treaty while again ensuring that expectations of it remain realistic. The value of the Treaty is clearly reflected in its near-universal adherence. Universality of the NPT remains an essential objective for Australia, and we call again on those States that have not already done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Undoubtedly, fresh concerns about the need for ballistic missile defences and the debate about implications for the international security system, including the ABM Treaty, are relevant to our collective endeavours. We look to those principally involved to negotiate in good faith about their respective security concerns and to ensure that these issues do not provide a reason for delaying progress with other established priorities.

I will take this opportunity to touch briefly on Australia's other security and arms control priorities. A successful conclusion of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Ad Hoc Group negotiations remains a high priority for the Australian Government. Australia is

committed to the establishment of a robust compliance regime which will strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention as a further important step towards the eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to work with others towards the successful conclusion of the negotiations as soon as possible. As part of that process, we propose to take forward the proposal for a high-level ministerial meeting as a means of providing vital political impetus to the negotiations. To secure adoption of the protocol in 2000, we believe it is essential to build upon the momentum gained during the last session of the Ad Hoc Group with the presentation of a range of substantive new proposals, including proposals by the non-aligned group. We therefore strongly support efforts to organize the work of the Ad Hoc Group to maximize the time available for the negotiations over the first half of the year 2000, and would urge others to do likewise.

We welcome the important and positive steps that have been taken by States parties and by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and consolidate the verifiable, legally-binding norm it represents. Experience to date in implementing the Convention demonstrates the strength that verification machinery adds to disarmament and arms control, recognizing that further action is needed to give full effect to the treaty. It is important, however, if the Convention is to succeed in its goal of ridding the world of chemical weapons, that those countries which have not ratified or acceded to the Convention do so.

Australia places considerable store on effective export control measures to meet non-proliferation objectives and obligations. It is vital that exporting States meet their obligations to ensure that exports of sensitive equipment, materials and technologies are subject to an appropriate system of controls. There need be no contradiction between effective export controls and access to the benefits of relevant technology for exclusively peaceful purposes. Indeed, export controls play an important part in creating the climate of assurance and security that underpins legitimate trade in sensitive goods and technology. At the same time, exporters are obliged to be prudent about the lessons of history and the success of a small number of States in international procurement for weapons of mass destruction programmes.

The entry into force over the past year of the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention represent significant steps forward, and underline the international community's commitment to eliminate the scourge of landmines. Australia is a State party to both these instruments, and we are strongly committed to their effective implementation. They are an essential part of the framework aimed at addressing this problem. But Australia is also committed to strengthening this framework where it is possible to do so, and in our view a transfer ban on anti-personnel landmines would complement and reinforce existing instruments. It would be an important incremental step towards the much desired universalization of obligations. Key producers and traders of these weapons stand ready and willing to negotiate a transfer ban, and we should capitalize on that willingness.

We should also capitalize on the increasing international attention being paid to the issue of small arms. The proliferation, misuse and accumulation of these weapons have devastating effects. It is a reality that, as a practical problem of security, small arms and light weapons have a far more direct impact on the everyday lives of people and cause far more deaths, injury and economic loss than weapons of mass destruction. There is a range of highly commendable regional initiatives on this issue already, and in our view regional efforts will provide the essential foundation for the incremental but comprehensive approach that is required.

With regard to our own region, the Asia-Pacific, a number of current efforts are deserving of attention. The South Pacific Forum is developing a common regional approach to weapons control, focusing on the illicit manufacture of, and trafficking in, firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. In addition, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum is expected to hold a regional transnational experts meeting to discuss transnational crime, including small arms, and the working group on transnational crime established under the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific is considering issues related to the illicit trafficking in firearms.

Australia has long been involved in a number of projects throughout the region and elsewhere aimed at addressing the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected communities. Again, these are incremental steps, but the issue of small arms is too serious and too complex to warrant quick fixes. The 2001 Conference on the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects should build on regional efforts as well as United Nations expertise in this area and the excellent work done by the Group of Experts to develop practical suggestions for dealing with this problem. For our part, we aim to maintain our national and

regional efforts and contribute actively to the international deliberations on this important emerging concern.

My delegation looks forward to contributing more specific comments in subsequent debate on individual items and draft resolutions.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I would also like to thank your predecessor for the good work he did last year.

In a few months' time we will enter a new millennium. Inevitably we will reflect on what mankind will carry into the new millennium and what we will leave behind. Will disarmament, for example, survive? The word "disarmament" has several definitions. But disarmament in the context of what we are trying to achieve here — to reduce and limit national armament by general international agreement — surfaced as a concept only at the conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907. Both ended in failure. This idea of disarmament was not revived until after 1945. Seen in the spectrum of over 5,000 years of recorded human history, it is reasonable to ask whether this 50-year-old disarmament movement represents a new dawn or perhaps only a brief flickering candle, soon to disappear.

Whether disarmament will survive will depend on the amount of good that it does for mankind. That statement may seem strange. If weapons kill, surely the elimination of weapons will bring good. But from the beginning of man we have learned that we can have too much of a good thing. Greek mythology tells us that when Icarus and his father Daedalus were trying to escape from their labyrinth prison Daedalus conceived of the idea of flying off with the help of wings held together by wax. The wings worked beautifully; father and son flew off. Icarus, alas, ignored the warning of his father and flew too close to the sun. His waxed wings melted and he plunged to his death. We should heed that fable as we try to escape the labyrinth of human history. We should carefully weigh how much flight we should take with the idea and processes of disarmament.

Finding the right balance will therefore be one of the key challenges to be faced by the Committee in the coming century and millennium. Disarmament is a subject that naturally invites sermons and speeches as well as passionate believers. Look at the recent debate in the United States on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). If disarmament advocates are to be believed, we should be dealing here with an open and shut case. Yet we are witnessing a stunning event, where a carefully negotiated Treaty intended to put a lid on nuclear-weapon development will have the lid blown wide open. That case illustrates well the central point we would like to make in this debate, that disarmament issues are almost inherently complex and difficult. Many in the world would like to believe that many disarmament issues are black and white — whether they concern nuclear weapons, landmines or small arms. Yet in each dimension of disarmament, if we are to be honest, we face difficult and uncomfortable questions.

Take the global process of disarmament. Since the Second World War it has been launched and driven by the developed States. Only they have had the spare intellectual capital and political and economic muscle to keep the process alive and well, even though it seems to go against the grain of human history. Yet, according to SIPRI, the top 20 suppliers of major conventional weapons are mainly the developed States. Ten countries accounted for almost 90 per cent of the estimated world arms production in 1996. The three largest arms-producing countries, the United States, THE United Kingdom and France, accounted for about two thirds, and the United States alone for roughly half of global arms production. We should not, even if we would like to, claim that the gap between words and deeds represents hypocrisy. It is only a vivid example of complexity in discussing disarmament. We find such complexity prevalent in disarmament discussions at all levels of weapons — big, medium and small. In none of these discussions will we find simple black and white answers.

For example, nuclear weapons — let us discuss big weapons first — are not normally praised in halls of disarmament. They are often portrayed, and fairly so, as the Sword of Damocles hanging over mankind. Only they can collectively eliminate the human race. And it takes only a few fingers on a few nuclear triggers to achieve that. Yet, paradoxically, they are also the weapons that have virtually never been used since the end of the Second World War. One can reasonably suggest that they have prevented a third world war by introducing sanity to the minds of military people who tend to assume that they can always win the next war. In a nuclear war they know that there will be no winners, only losers.

If some nuclear weapons are good, should we not therefore have some more? Not surprisingly, there is at least one strategic thinker who argues this. Professor John Mearsheimer, in an article in the summer 1993 edition of *Foreign Affairs* entitled "The case for a Ukrainian nuclear deterrent", argued:

> "nuclear proliferation sometimes promotes peace. Overall, the best formula for maintaining stability in post-Cold War Europe is for all the great powers — including Germany and Ukraine — to have secure nuclear deterrents and for all the minor powers to be non-nuclear."

Such simplistic logic may work well in academia. In the real world we know that mankind has come to accept the five nuclear Powers as an undeniable and irreversible fact of history. But it is also important and necessary that we should prevent proliferation. In turn, the five nuclear Powers must retain the trust and confidence of the rest of mankind by behaving responsibly on all nuclear issues. That is why the potential rejection of the CTBT by the United States is such a troubling development. It may awaken dragons that mankind would rather see in continued slumber.

The other dragons we should keep in slumber are those to be found in the field of chemical and biological weapons. They can also be potent weapons of mass destruction. Like nuclear weapons, they have been virtually unused in wars between major Powers, although there has been a disturbing tendency of some medium Powers to use them. Given the horrifying capability of such weapons, it is surprising that so few non-governmental organizations and public personalities have pursued vigorously any campaign to wipe them from the face of the earth. We can understand their preoccupation with landmines and small arms, but it is distressing to see disarmament advocates behave like fashion designers, going with the flavour of the day and not looking at long-term needs.

If the elimination of nuclear weapons is a distant dream, the elimination of medium weapons — tanks, jet fighters and naval gunboats — seems even more remote. Curiously, the only thing that seems to have kept pace with the increase in disarmament forums is the sale of these weapons. Indeed, for most nations, acquiring them seems to be almost a test of manhood. We are, of course, aware that not all are calling for the total elimination of these weapons. Most, instead, advocate only a reduction in such weapons. Even that is a goal that most countries do not really aim for. In real life they continue to acquire such weapons.

Here again acquisition need not necessarily be bad in itself. Clearly, the strongest military organization in the world is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Its member States possess the most sophisticated military equipment in the world. Despite this, they continue to build and upgrade their weaponry to maintain a technological lead that is increasing rapidly over the rest of mankind. Yet the possibility of war between any two NATO States is virtually zero, despite this continuous rearmament. Clearly, weapons in themselves do not ignite wars. In some cases they may actively prevent wars, following the paradoxical wisdom contained in the famous saying by Vegetius: "Let him who desires peace prepare for war". There may yet come a time when mankind will set up a collective security order to prevent, and if that does not succeed, to intervene in all conflicts. But we all know that for each Kosovo there is a Somalia. Sometimes the international community helps to defuse conflicts. Often it does not. Self-reliance in defence may therefore be necessary for some time to come.

If self-reliance will be necessary for the majority of mankind for quite a while, it is puzzling that so much of the international community's attention is taken up by the disarmament of small weapons. Most of mankind is still relatively poor. To deprive those people of the basic means to defend themselves would be unfair, for in the event of a crisis they would be defenceless. That is why in our statement to the Committee last year we retold the tale of the three little pigs, and warned that houses made of straw and wood were of little use against wolves. And wolves continue to prey in our world. Certainly we should terminate the illicit trade in small arms, but it would be folly to curtail the legal trade in them.

In the real world the illicit trade in small arms can be compared to the trade in illicit drugs. Yet, paradoxically, the developed States recommend contrary approaches to dealing with these problems. In small arms they try to choke off the consumers. In illicit drugs they try to choke off the suppliers. The only explanation for these strange approaches is that in both cases the burden is passed to the developing countries. The developed countries are as reluctant to choke off their own export of small arms as they are to choke off the consumers of illicit drugs in their own countries. All this only reinforces the central point we would like to make today: disarmament issues are inherently complex.

That does not mean that we should not persevere in our work. Some of the small gains we have made over the years are valuable. We should work to strengthen them. For example, it is a pity that for last year only 66 countries out of the then 185 United Nations Member States submitted returns to the Arms Register. By contrast, over a hundred members are addressing the Committee on disarmament issues this year. We should work towards a more universal participation in the Register before thinking

of expanding it. Similarly, we have set up a useful verification regime for chemical weapons. Each such regime contributes to greater compliance, and compliance in turn inspires trust.

To preserve these gains, small though they may be, we should ensure that disarmament survives well into the next millennium. The only way to survive is to take a carefully calibrated middle path that acknowledges the complexity of the issues we deal with. If not, if we try to progress in a linear fashion, arguing that more disarmament is always good, we may end up like Icarus flying too close to the sun with fragile wings, and we will leave mankind stuck in its old labyrinth of history.

Mr. Martynov (Belarus): May I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the important and responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee at the current session. I am confident that with your rich diplomatic experience and under your able guidance this session will be steered to success and we will be able to find meaningful decisions, so much needed, on the most urgent issues on the First Committee's agenda. On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, let me assure you of our full support and cooperation. I should like also to wish the best of success to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, in his untiring efforts in the field of disarmament.

It is no exaggeration to say that the process of international disarmament is rapidly approaching its critical point. On the eve of a new millennium, many positive achievements in the area of international security and disarmament are being confronted by new and alarming challenges.

Cold war and direct confrontation between the two super-Powers and the military blocs behind them have been replaced by a multipolar imbalance, whose numerous destabilizing factors are fraught with potential regional instability and local conflicts in many parts of the world. The influence of these factors on the international security and disarmament process, which has been steady and purposeful in the last decade, should not be underestimated. Lack of substantive results in the activities of the Conference on Disarmament; insufficient progress in making the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) genuinely universal; the failure of the Disarmament Commission to agree on holding the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament: these are all today's reality. We must face that reality. New approaches and new solutions are needed to break through the monotony of the stalemates.

To be fair, it should also be noted that there have been positive achievements in the area of disarmament and international security. So-called preventive disarmament might be singled out among such positive trends. Although this tool has been used so far largely by the growing movement to prohibit the illegal transfer of small arms, it could and should be applied in the sphere of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, as well as in working out and implementing new initiatives. History proves that the international community starts the disarmament process only after mankind has excessive, or at least considerable, stockpiles of particular armaments. Practically any type of armament can be used as an example, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

In this connection, the draft resolution to be submitted at this session by the delegation of the Republic of Belarus is aimed at preventing the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction. The goal of the draft resolution is to maintain the procedure built into the existing disarmament mechanism, to monitor the situation and trigger international action if such is required. We hope that this draft resolution will, as in the case of similar draft resolutions in the past, be adopted without a vote and will become another modest element of the growing preventive disarmament trend.

In speaking of today's challenges, I should like to touch on certain key problems in the area of international security and disarmament which are a top priority for our delegation, due to their significance in maintaining security and stability at both global and regional levels. Of vital significance for the process of nuclear disarmament in the past three decades have undoubtedly been the signing and entry into force of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the reduction of strategic offensive weapons within the START I framework and the expected further logical reduction of nuclear weapons under the START II Treaty after the instruments of ratification have been deposited by the Russian Federation and the United States; the unprecedented decision by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and their voluntary withdrawal from their territories; and treaties setting up nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, Latin America, South-East Asia and the Pacific.

The Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) has been, throughout its existence of more than a quarter of a century, a further international agreement to maintain strategic stability, prevent new cycles of the nuclear arms race and provide for their radical reduction. It cannot be disputed that this Treaty, signed and ratified by the two major nuclear Powers, defines the entire system of coordinates for global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The viability of this Treaty as a whole is thus of paramount significance, not only for its parties but also for the entire international community. An obligation not to deploy an ABM system for defence of a party's territory, and not to create a base for such a defence, is a key provision of the ABM Treaty and might be considered in future, not only in the context of its observance by the Treaty parties, but also for wider use, especially under the present conditions of the dangerous proliferation of missiles and missile technology.

In 1997 the Republic of Belarus signed, along with other parties, significant additional agreements which contributed to the strengthening of the efficiency and viability of this extremely important Treaty. We called for strict and full compliance with the ABM Treaty by all the parties in order to preserve its substance without undermining or revising its basic provisions. The actual deployment of national ABM systems would torpedo all the efforts made earlier by the international community in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and would push the matter to an unpredictably dangerous point by undermining START I, START II and the intermediate nuclear forces Treaty, as well as by creating conditions for the escalation of the arms race in new spheres.

In this connection, our delegation, jointly with the delegation of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, has put forward a draft resolution entitled "Preservation of and compliance with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty", whose main purpose is to give a positive impetus to the efforts of the international community to ensure international security, stability and predictability. We count on the broadest possible support for the draft resolution.

Strict compliance with every international agreement in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is a fundamental basis for ensuring further progress towards achieving the final goal: eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; reducing the threat of global and regional conflicts; and ensuring peace and stability for all, without exception. An important contribution to this process could be made by achieving the universality of the NPT and the CTBT, elaborating efficient verification instruments for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and holding in 2001 an international conference on the illegal transfer of small arms.

We are deeply shocked by the decision of the United States Senate the other day not to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This is a severe blow to the whole edifice and basic structure of modern disarmament and non-proliferation. It is also a blow to trust, which is of paramount importance in negotiating sensitive arms control and disarmament agreements. The whole spectrum of consequences has yet to be analysed. At the same time, we would like to register Belarus's appreciation of the efforts of the United States Executive branch and President Clinton to salvage the situation. We hope they will continue these efforts.

Belarus supports the efforts of the international community directed at elaborating effective international agreements on security assurances for non-nuclear NPT States parties against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that this will only strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including through the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Belarus considers their establishment a positive step, contributing to strengthening common regional security and mutual confidence between the countries of the region — for example, in the Middle East, Central Asia and other regions. That is exactly the purpose of the Belarus initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe. We are convinced that its realization will become a clear priority for the nations of the region in the first half of the twenty-first century.

Our delegation would like to underline the significance of the document, "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned", adopted recently by the Disarmament Commission. It provides an internationally agreed basis for setting up nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Today it is extremely important for the United Nations General Assembly to reaffirm, with full authority, the key role played by the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and to stimulate intensified efforts to perfect the practice of United Nations peacekeeping activities with an emphasis on conflict prevention. We believe that security can only be reliably guaranteed when any effort to provide for the security of

individual countries at the expense and to the detriment of the security of others will for ever have become a thing of the past. We hope that the only way to promote international relations will be the spirit of partnership, cooperation and trust, and not the spectre of political and economic pressure or the build-up of the unilateral supremacy of military alliances. Exclusive security is a contradiction in terms. Inclusive security, indivisible security, is the key to real, not fake, stability.

An important security-building effort has been undertaken at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has entered the final stage of drafting the European security charter. We are convinced that the OSCE possesses wide abilities, successfully tested. The Belarus delegation is actively participating in the elaboration of the charter. We hope this document will be adopted at the OSCE summit in Istanbul this November. We are convinced that its adoption will provide a favourable and solid basis for further promoting partnership and cooperation in Europe in a spirit of trust and mutual understanding between all the nations of the region.

Under present conditions, special significance is attached to the existing regional disarmament and confidence-building agreements, particularly the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Vienna Document. Belarus is also actively participating in negotiations on the adaptation of the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document, which are going on in Vienna as we speak here, and hopes that these documents will be ready for signature at the OSCE summit in Istanbul.

In conclusion, let me confirm once again the readiness of my delegation to have fruitful cooperation with you, Mr. Chairman, other members of the Bureau and delegations of all other States in our joint efforts to achieve constructive results in the activities of this Committee.

Mrs. Kunadi (India): The Indian delegation extends to you, Sir, its sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We have every confidence that under your guidance the Committee will accomplish the tasks that it has set for itself.

The closing weeks of this millennium have brought forth in all of us thoughts about humanity's endeavours during what has arguably been an extraordinarily bloody century. This Committee, dealing as it does with international security issues, has much to learn from the lessons of the past to ensure that mistakes are not repeated in the future. The Millennium Summit to be held next year can benefit from our work. Therefore, an added responsibility rests on us this year. This Committee has learned all too often that focus on contentious issues vitiates the atmosphere and saps its productive potential. We hope that the Committee's deliberations will lead us down the path of a collective reappraisal and contribute to the achievement of the disarmament agenda in the years ahead.

The failure of the international community to effectively address the threat posed by nuclear weapons over the past 50 years makes it all the more necessary that we redouble our efforts for their elimination in the coming years. The instrument designed to deal with nuclear weapons and promote global nuclear disarmament and genuine non-proliferation in all its aspects, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has proved to be ineffective. Genuine and long-lasting non-proliferation in all its aspects, in the absence of a disarmament yardstick, is difficult not only to achieve, but also to measure. The goal of global nuclear non-proliferation can be achieved if the international community looks beyond the old framework and embraces a new security paradigm that can ensure international peace and security on the basis of equal and legitimate security for all through global disarmament.

The non-discriminatory international Conventions prohibiting chemical and biological weapons respectively were based on a devaluation of the military utility of these weapons and on the belief that, rather than having partial and discriminatory arms control, the interests of international security would be better served through their complete prohibition and elimination. The delegitimization of nuclear weapons and their progressive reduction through a step-by-step process offers the most credible way forward towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. As an original State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), India has endeavoured to discharge, fully and faithfully, its obligations under the Convention. There remains the continuing responsibility of all States parties to the CWC to ensure that all its provisions are implemented fully and effectively. It is a matter of collective concern that some States parties have, despite voicing support for the Convention, not provided full declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), adversely affecting the inspection schedules.

India has participated actively and constructively in the ongoing negotiations in Geneva in the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Ad Hoc Group. We hope that these negotiations, undertaken in accordance with the agreed mandate and without artificial deadlines, will yield results

as soon as possible, before the fifth Review Conference in 2001. It is our expectation that the future protocol will not only strengthen the implementation of the BWC, but will also give full expression, in a non-discriminatory manner, to the developmental imperatives contained in article III and article X of the Convention essential for the conclusion of a universally acceptable protocol.

The initial promise of deep, continuous and irreversible reductions in strategic nuclear forces held out by the positive climate of the early post-cold-war years appears to be fading fast. Those countries with the largest nuclear arsenals clearly also have the main responsibility for moving forward the process of nuclear arms reductions. We hope that the agreements reached during the Cologne summit will lead to an early revitalization of the bilateral process. The current stalemate in bilateral nuclear arms negotiations should not be taken as a disincentive for the other long-established nuclear-weapon States, each with substantial arsenals of their own, to undertake reductions in a multilateral framework.

Doctrines of first-use of nuclear weapons have been revalidated, even though the threat perceptions that originally gave rise to those doctrines disappeared long ago. The only remaining military alliance with transcontinental dimensions continues to assign to nuclear weapons the highest priority, with several of its members, ostensibly non-nuclear-weapon States, permitting peace-time deployment of nuclear weapons on their territories and given war-time access to those very weapons, in violation of treaty obligations undertaken by them.

Several distinguished institutions, including several non-governmental organizations, the media and other voices from civil society the world over, have supported the call for a world order based on the principles of equal and legitimate security for all, convinced that it is both essential and possible to bring about the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This was echoed recently at the meeting in New Delhi of Pugwash on the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

In its landmark Advisory Opinion the International Court of Justice concluded unanimously that there exists an obligation not just to begin, but also to bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We need to consider further steps that can build upon that historic Advisory Opinion.

With the end of the cold war a decade ago, there is no justification for the thousands of nuclear weapons that are maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert, creating unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons that could have catastrophic consequences for all mankind. The international community is therefore entitled to clear commitments from all the nuclear-weapon States that the most important objective of their policies is to remove the danger of war and reduce the risk of accidental or unintentional use of nuclear weapons, including through what is referred to as the Y2K problem.

Last year India's initiative in introducing a new draft resolution, "Reducing nuclear danger", received widespread support in the General Assembly. A number of programmes and measures for achieving global nuclear disarmament have been put forward by States, eminent individuals, or non-governmental organizations attributing the highest priority to the need to take steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. We propose to reintroduce a similar draft resolution this year, with the expectation that the international community will take the necessary action, both individually and collectively, to reduce the risks posed by hair-trigger-alert postures and related doctrines of use.

There is no dilution of India's commitment to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. India is the only nuclear-weapon State that believes that its security would be enhanced in a nuclear-weapon-free world and thus continues to press for negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention that will prohibit for ever the development, production, stockpiling, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and provide for the elimination of all existing weapons under international verification.

Convinced that a world without nuclear weapons would enhance global security as well as its own, India has taken forward several initiatives towards this end. It was the first to call for a ban on nuclear testing, in 1954; for a non-discriminatory treaty on non-proliferation, in 1965; for a treaty on the non-use of nuclear weapons, in 1978; for a nuclear freeze, in 1982; and, in 1988, for a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. None of these were accepted. We were, in turn, asked to join, as supplicants, an unequal and discriminatory non-proliferation regime which is underwritten by a Treaty that has proved to be better at freezing in perpetuity a slice of history as the world stood on 1 January 1967 than at reflecting and contending with the realities of proliferation that that Treaty has been unable to prevent, or the Treaty parties have been unwilling to prevent. The failure of the

existing non-proliferation regime has obliged us to take measures to safeguard our security.

The Indian Government has already spelt out in Parliament the main elements of its policy of minimum nuclear deterrence, with the stated purpose of meeting the requirements of its democratic polity: openness and transparency, consistent with national security. The minimum deterrent posture, based on the self-evident principle of "more is not better when less is adequate", governs both the quantum and the operational mode of our nuclear policy, which is characterized by restraint, an essential duty of confidence-building that every nuclear-weapon State owes, but has seldom discharged, to the international community.

The deployment posture, with a civilian command-and-control structure, will be governed by our abiding commitments, voluntarily offered and unconditionally undertaken, to no-first-use of nuclear weapons and to the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We have already stated our willingness to strengthen this undertaking by entering into bilateral agreements on no-first-use or multilateral negotiations on a global no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

The Committee is aware of the circumstances leading to India's standing aside from the CTBT in 1996. That decision, taken on the basis of national consensus, was governed by certain considerations, some of which have been addressed through the limited series of five underground nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998. Thereafter, India announced a voluntary moratorium on further underground test explosions. The Government of India is committed to creating the widest possible consensus domestically, and naturally a positive environment will be an essential enabling element. We also expect that other countries will adhere to that Treaty without conditions. Recent developments indicate that the CTBT is not a simple, uncomplicated issue. Among other things, it requires building a national consensus in the countries concerned, including India.

India joined the consensus on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) resolution 53/77 I, adopted by the General Assembly at its last session, a resolution not without the dubious significance of having, literally, a paragraph in lieu of a title. That procedural resolution, adopted without a vote, reaffirmed the substance of resolution 48/75 L, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993.

We are aware that when the Conference on Disarmament is able to successfully negotiate such a treaty it will only be a partial measure towards our shared objective of global nuclear disarmament. India's participation in the negotiations will be constructive and aimed at moving the process forward. The agreement reached in the Conference on Disarmament in 1998 on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on fissile material was made possible by the highest flexibility of a large section of its delegations, including India, whose highest priority remains the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

Despite this flexibility, the Conference on Disarmament was unable this year to register forward movement. This stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, despite no delegation's opposing negotiations on an FMCT, conveys an important lesson — the Conference on Disarmament cannot and should not be used for the pursuit of the exclusivist agendas of a few.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot lose sight of the actual priorities in the disarmament agenda that the international community expects of it. We believe that there should be no slackening of efforts on the vital issue of nuclear disarmament. There are several proposals on the table which deserve serious consideration, including the draft decision put forward by the Group of 21 in document CD/1571 on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention. The Conference should utilize to the full mechanisms provided for in its rules of procedure for building the consensus necessary to enable future negotiations. As the single multilateral disarmament forum, the Conference has a crucial, indispensable role.

India has viewed the convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons as the bedrock of negative security assurances which are comprehensive, legally binding, and an irreversible step towards delegitimizing nuclear weapons. India, along with several co-sponsors, which have extended invaluable support, as in previous years, intends to put forward a draft resolution on this subject.

While we have consistently maintained that nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot do justice to the wide variety of concerns emanating from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, we respect the sovereign choice exercised by non-nuclear-weapon States in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements

freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. We were pleased that the Disarmament Commission was able to reach agreement this year on this subject. Its work will provide useful consensus guidelines we can keep in mind while considering further measures to reduce the global threat posed by nuclear weapons.

At the sixth session of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in Singapore, India reiterated that it fully respects the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and is ready to convert this commitment into a legal obligation. India will also remain responsive to the expressed need for such commitments to other nuclear-weapon-free zones. India looks forward to further productive interaction with the States of Central Asia, including through the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. India is also prepared to make all necessary commitments for the early realization of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The peaceful applications of nuclear technology are of critical importance for developing countries. As the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) prepares to meet the challenges of coming years, it should remain faithful to its original mandate as a promoter of atomic energy, not just a policeman. Discriminatory restrictions on access to materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, including restrictions which negatively impact on nuclear safety, must give way to open and transparent arrangements. Recent events have shown that we should continue to attach the highest importance to nuclear safety. India is positively considering its accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, whose standards of physical protection India has long been practising.

India remains fully committed to maintaining and further strengthening an effective and transparent system of export controls of technologies that would be in line with the objective of non-proliferation in all its aspects, without affecting the peaceful applications of these technologies. At the same time, as a developing country that has had to pay a high developmental cost in view of the persistence of discriminatory control mechanisms, some contrary to existing treaty provisions, India has been fully supportive of multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use technologies and high technologies with military applications. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in bringing out the report, "Role of Science and Technology in the context of international security and disarmament", in document A/54/167 and its addenda. With a view to carrying forward the consideration of this subject, India proposes, along with co-sponsors which have extended invaluable support, a draft resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

The Conference on Disarmament was unable during its 1999 session to address issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. India was one of the sponsors of resolution 53/76, which reiterated that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement, or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

Technological developments, including in ballistic missile defences, could have the effect of opening new areas of competition, adding to pressures against the ABM Treaty. We share the concerns expressed in the final communiqué of the Non-Aligned Movement issued in New York on 23 September regarding the negative implications of these developments and the further erosion of the international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

We support the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an appropriate instrument that would, as a first step, ensure the non-weaponization of space, while preserving the use of space — which is the common heritage of mankind — for the full range of peaceful and developmental activities.

India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel mines through a phased process that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States while ameliorating the critical humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the indiscriminate transfer and use of landmines. We would support negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on banning transfers of anti-personnel landmines on the basis of a mandate that reflects the interests of all delegations.

India has been an active participant in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) process, and this year it ratified amended Protocol II as well as Protocol IV. The first conference of States parties, to be held in December this year in Geneva, will be a useful opportunity to review progress in the CCW process.

The continuing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which find their way to non-State entities, fuelling

strife and terrorism, has been recognized by the international community as one of its priority problems. The transnational linkages, including cross-border terrorism and narco-terrorism, are expanding by the day. We note that there is now a greater awareness of the magnitude and ramifications of this problem, which has a disproportionately large negative impact on the internal stability and socio-economic development of the States affected. The fabric of international society is also threatened by the spectre of international terrorism, fuelled by the availability and transfer of illicit arms.

India supports and will actively participate in the preparatory process for the holding of the proposed international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, in 2001. To prepare for such a conference we believe it would be useful to establish a preparatory committee with a mandate to define the objectives, scope, agenda and final outcome of the Conference.

We were disappointed that the deliberations of the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) did not meet with success. While India remains committed to the convening of SSOD-IV, we feel that it is essential that we do so by reaffirming the priorities, including that on nuclear disarmament, that were agreed to by consensus in SSOD-I. India cannot be a party to attempts to overturn that consensus. The heads of State or Government at the Durban Non-Aligned Movement summit reaffirmed the need to continue to press for further steps leading to the convening of SSOD-IV, with the participation of all Member States of the United Nations, as well as the need for SSOD-IV to review and assess the implementation of SSOD-I. We believe that other initiatives, especially on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament, would complement as well as contribute to the success of SSOD-IV when it is convened.

As we stand on the threshold of the next millennium, let us resolve to intensify our efforts to strengthen international peace and security. An essential element will have to be a common recognition that the measures we discuss and negotiate are global and non-discriminatory, and will therefore enhance the security of all. The quest for a unilateral security advantage for a few, or the assertion of a right to exclusive standards of national security, goes contrary to the spirit that can sustain a durable system of international security. The Committee should firmly oppose such trends if the international community is to face the multitude of challenges that may arise in the next millennium.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): At the outset let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. I am confident that under your wise guidance our session will have a successful outcome. I should like to assure you and your Bureau of our delegation's full support.

This session of the First Committee is convened at a very critical juncture of human history. A century of bloody and devastating wars is coming to an end, and humankind stands before a time of great uncertainty with hopes and anxieties. The end of the cold war has brought new opportunities and challenges for the world community to work for a safer and more secure world, as half a century of hostility and rivalry between the great Powers has been replaced by a period of reduced tension and enhanced cooperation. Yet it has become increasingly clear that some of these precious opportunities are being wasted.

In certain quarters of the planet military alliances, which should have little relevance in our world today, have been further strengthened, against the common desire of the overwhelming majority of nations. The development of missile defence systems, on the other hand, introduces nascent risks that may trigger an arms race in outer space and threaten world peace and security. Moreover, nuclear disarmament efforts have been pushed back even further by intransigence in the policies of the nuclear-weapon States in stubbornly sticking to reliance on the deterrence of nuclear weapons. Many delegations have argued during this week's debate very convincingly about the irrelevance of the nuclear-deterrence theory embodied in the security strategies of the nuclear-weapon States. These are indeed not developments to be welcomed, and greater efforts are called for to prevent them.

At the dawn of a new millennium, humanity still lives under the threat of a nuclear holocaust. My delegation fully shares the view of Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala that the most consistently difficult issue on the Committee's agenda is the goal of global nuclear disarmament. Despite the fact that a sense of frustration has prevailed in the interventions of many delegations during this week of general debate, my delegation holds that the goal of the total elimination of nuclear stockpiles remains the highest priority of the international community and lies at the heart of the work of the United Nations.

Viet Nam is fully convinced that it is now time for the world community to combine efforts to reach a convention to ban nuclear weapons for good. We are committed to working with other member countries for a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to support every initiative to this end. However, Viet Nam shares the view that pending the conclusion of such a convention the concrete, step-by-step programme called for in the new agenda for nuclear disarmament is a practical and achievable approach.

We also join many other delegations in calling on the nuclear-weapon States to commit themselves immediately to a programme to do away with all their nuclear stockpiles within a time-bound framework. In this connection, we wish to underline that nuclear-weapon States are obligated under legal instruments to conduct genuine negotiations to eliminate each and every nuclear weapon they have produced. It is still incumbent upon these States to fulfil the provisions of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They have to hold to the commitments under that Treaty to ensure its integrity and full realization.

In this context, the discussion on the measures to make the coming NPT Review Conference a success is of special significance. Viet Nam is sympathetic with the regret expressed by a good number of delegations over the failures of the preparatory process for the NPT Review Conference next year, and wishes to emphasize that urgent action should be taken to pave the way for the review process. The record of our accomplishments in implementing the decisions and resolutions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference is poor indeed. We hope that the coming Review Conference will give us the needed impetus to make some headway in this endeavour.

It is, however, a pleasure for my delegation to note that the recent Vienna Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has strengthened the determination of the participating countries to work harder for the entry into force of this important instrument. In order to facilitate the Treaty's speedy entry into force, in our view the nuclear-weapon States must lead the way and proceed with their ratification without further delay.

My delegation believes that the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be convened as early as possible to garner the necessary support for the commitments to comprehensive and complete disarmament. The objective of the session should be to chart a new course in the field of disarmament and build on the achievements of the historic first special session as well as the other landmarks recorded thereafter. It is disappointing that at its recent meetings the Disarmament Commission failed to arrive at a conclusion on this matter. Viet Nam supports the proposal by the Chilean delegation to set up an informal working group to sound out the positions of member countries with a view to arriving at a satisfactory programme and agenda for the special session.

One of the greatest achievements in disarmament in the post-cold-war era is the conclusion and entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which is aimed at destroying all weapons of this type. Viet Nam ratified that Convention last fall and is fully committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. In this connection, we highly appreciate the technical assistance provided by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the international community for the developing countries party to the Convention.

Viet Nam is also party to the Biological Weapons Convention. We will join other member countries to work out a protocol to strengthen the verification regimes needed under the Convention. It is necessary to underline that such regimes should be reasonably inexpensive, which would enhance rather than impede cooperation among States parties to the Convention with respect to the peaceful uses of biotechnology.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a useful nuclear non-proliferation measure. These zones also help to consolidate trust among countries parties to the treaties setting up such zones. They therefore bring benefits to the security and peace of the regions. Viet Nam supports the efforts to create such zones on the basis of agreements mutually arrived at by the parties concerned.

In this connection, I wish to underline that all the countries of South-East Asia have joined the endeavour to turn our region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty entered into force more than two years ago. All countries in the region are firmly committed to keeping South-East Asia free from nuclear weapons. A protocol attached to the Treaty is open to the nuclear-weapon States for signature. It is promising that the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have expressed a desire to sign and ratify that protocol in the near future. Viet Nam once again calls upon all the nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify

the protocol, so that the Treaty will be fully effective, thus making a practical contribution to the consolidation of peace and security in South-East Asia, in particular, and in the world as a whole.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Viet Nam shares the concerns of various delegations over the failure of this important multilateral negotiating body on disarmament to reach agreement on its working agenda. We are also very disappointed that, due to the divergence of views of the member countries, the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to set up an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We are pleased, however, that after years of negotiation five more countries have been admitted to this body, and we wish to underline that the Conference on Disarmament should be further expanded so as to become a more representative and strengthened body.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm our support for the work of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. It is our belief that the Centre has been very useful in enhancing understanding and mutual trust among countries in the region in terms of both security and the disarmament process. We therefore commend the efforts by the Director of the Centre in carrying out his responsibilities.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First may I on behalf of my delegation congratulate you, Sir, on your well deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of the full support of my delegation in your delicate task. I should also like to express our appreciation of the remarkable work done by Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala, at the head of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary role of the United Nations, and it is most appropriate that disarmament is at the centre of the collective security system. This shows how important the work of the First Committee is. The Committee is rightly regarded as a deliberating forum of universal scope, where nations focus on achieving the objectives of disarmament in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Because of the relevance of its recommendations and its prestige, the Committee has clearly made a significant contribution to the work of disarmament.

Over the decade, impressive progress has been made towards general, complete and verifiable disarmament. That progress was made possible thanks to our collective aspirations and our commitment, on the threshold of a new millennium, to work for an era of peace, security and stability, which should mark the end of our divisions.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the indefinite extension of the NPT, the signing by an overwhelming majority of States of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and South-East Asia, and the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention: these have all been important breakthroughs which must make us hope for further successes in disarmament.

Despite much progress, we cannot lose sight of the fact that a great deal remains to be done to achieve the ideal of disarmament. In fact, taking stock of the negotiations on disarmament and nuclear-arms control, we must note a slowing down, if not a standstill, particularly over the past two years. Today we face the very difficult question of knowing what follow-up should be given to the momentum we have created over the past five years.

In that respect, my country, as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, must once more deplore the uncertain situation of this disarmament body. Stuck for the past three years in sterile considerations which bear little relationship to its solid reputation for efficiency or the spirit of consensus which has always animated it, it seems to have become drowsy, yielding to mistrust and suspicion, with the least proposal made by a country or group of countries being immediately suspect.

Thus this single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum has been incapable of continuing negotiations on halting the production of fissile material for military purposes, known as "cut-off", negotiations which were started in 1998. My delegation invites the members of the Conference to make a healthy leap forward by ensuring that the consultations become less passionate and are carried on in a new climate of trust and political will, which is the only guarantee of success for so huge an enterprise as achieving together the total, verifiable, universal elimination of nuclear weapons.

So-called conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, continue to cause great suffering throughout the world, particularly in Africa. Senegal considers that we must pay more sustained attention to the proliferation and illicit trafficking in these weapons, which not only threaten the peace, security and stability of African States, but are major obstacles to the building and

consolidation of the democratic process, without which no economic and social development policy will be possible on our continent. Senegal therefore shares the opinion of many countries on the absolute priority that must be given to strategies and policies aimed at combating the proliferation of these small arms and eliminating their sale and trade.

My country, together with the other members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has resolutely focused on seeking a regional solution to combat this scourge. The adoption on 31 October 1998 at Abuja by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of ECOWAS of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa was a major event in the fight against the accumulation, proliferation and use of these weapons. That Moratorium, which came into force on 1 November 1998, was extended and strengthened in the framework of the integrated security and development project known as the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, aimed at creating the proper synergies between the urgent requirements of security and stability and the need for harmonious economic and social development. The objective of this Programme is to establish a genuine culture for peace and security in our subregion.

Fortunately, this action of the ECOWAS States is not isolated. It is part and parcel of a broad international campaign to stifle the destabilizing accumulation of light weapons. In Africa the thirty-fifth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting in Algiers in July, adopted responsible, concrete decisions to tackle this delicate question of the proliferation and illegal movement of small arms and light weapons, which fuel the many conflicts still going on in the continent and the terrorist and criminal networks that seek to affect the stability and security of States.

However, we must emphasize that this need to make Africa safe against this scourge goes far beyond the borders of the continent, which it is hardly necessary to remind the Committee does not produce arms. It also requires the whole international community, in particular the arms-producing countries, to carry out resolute, coordinated international action to resolve all aspects of the proliferation of and illegal trade in these weapons.

We welcome the initiatives to that end taken in Latin America, and particularly by the European Union, which on 17 December adopted a Joint Action of its members concerning this problem. The Action was extended to include Canada within the framework of the common approach of the European Union and Canada, signed on 2 September 1999 at Helsinki, to combat the dissemination and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. All these initiatives are aimed at adopting joint coordinated action at the international, regional and national levels with a view to contributing to establishing lasting peace in regions threatened or affected by conflicts.

Clearly, all these actions, however relevant, must be harmonized by the United Nations bodies with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council on 23 September held a general debate on this issue, and noted that the proliferation of these weapons is a factor which harms peace agreements, complicates activities to consolidate peace, and impedes economic and social development policies. That diagnosis shows how important it is to convene an international conference on the illegal trade in small arms in all its aspects in 2001. We must take this opportunity to examine this question seriously, make constructive, and practical proposals, and, in particular, prepare the conference well.

It will be understood that the problem of small arms is a source of major concern to my country, Senegal. The question of anti-personnel mines is also very important. The Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was the result of an excellent initiative to banish from our world these devastating weapons, which are a true scourge of our times. Its entry into force in March was an important step in our disarmament efforts. The success of the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, which was held from 3 to 7 May 1999 at Maputo, is a perfect illustration of the commitment of our community of nations to focus with determination on the fight against these arms.

We must redouble our efforts in the practical implementation of the relevant provisions of this important international legal instrument and support the inter-sessional process of the five Standing Committees of Experts, which include experts of international renown. We must also pay special attention to cooperation between Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to ensure that major objectives, such as demining and assistance to victims, are achieved within a reasonable deadline. The Convention is a genuine opportunity to coordinate resources at the global level to

provide effective and adequate assistance to the victims of mines and to the countries affected by this scourge.

Senegal, like all other peace-loving countries, attaches special importance to achieving the common objective of general and complete disarmament, which inevitably depends on eliminating all weapons of mass destruction and limiting the proliferation of conventional weapons. Because of this commitment, my delegation reiterates its appeal for the signature and ratification of treaties. In that respect, the slow pace of ratification of the CTBT is of great concern to us. Senegal, a signatory of all the disarmament treaties and conventions, has always worked and continues to work for the transfer of the immense sums involved in the arms race to operations for sustainable development, because in the final analysis the development of all nations through the dividends of disarmament should concern us as we stand on the threshold of the next millennium. It should also strengthen our collective work, if we really wish to build a world of peace, security, stability and economic and social progress.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): I wish to associate myself with the congratulations already addressed to you, Sir, on your election to the responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee, and to express my confidence that under your able leadership the work of the Committee will be fruitful and effective. I should also like to express our gratitude to the representative of Belgium for his excellent guidance of the Committee's work at its previous session.

The current session of the First Committee is being held at a crucial period, when the approaching new millennium compels us to take stock of what we have achieved and to work out reliable guidelines for international relations in the future.

The priority disarmament task remains the strengthening of the international regime for the non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan fully supports the efforts being made at the United Nations and in other multilateral forums to ensure the immediate and unconditional accession of all States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and to enhance the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

Kazakhstan is in favour of steady, step-by-step nuclear disarmament through the fulfilment of their commitments by all States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. On the eve of the 2000 Review Conference, the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials remain tasks of paramount importance that can be solved only through constructive dialogue between, and concerted efforts by, both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. Our delegation stands ready to make its contribution to the success of the 2000 Conference to review the effectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The renunciation of all forms of nuclear weapons was a natural choice for my country, which experienced to the full the disastrous effects of nuclear testing. Kazakhstan was one of the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. Our country makes a practical contribution to efforts to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring compliance. We support the Treaty's entry into force at the earliest possible date, in accordance with its provisions.

The problem of providing security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States continues to be a major concern. In this regard, we believe that there is a need, which is quite natural, to take measures to legalize the so-called negative security assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States on the basis of Security Council resolution 984 (1995).

In our view, the United Nations should play the primary role in solving disarmament problems. The international community's success in achieving a safe, stable and prosperous world depends on the strengthening of cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

Article VII of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the decisions of the 1995 Conference on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament have provided a solid legal basis for establishing new internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones that will help to strengthen peace and security at the global and regional levels.

Kazakhstan attaches paramount importance to the preservation of peace and security in the Central Asian region, and is keenly interested in progress towards implementing the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Substantial work is being carried out by the group of experts from the five countries of the region, which was established with the assistance of the United Nations. We are convinced that such a zone in Central Asia will constitute an important step towards consolidating the nuclear non-proliferation regime, promoting general and complete disarmament and

strengthening regional and international peace and security. Kazakhstan will continue to participate consistently and constructively in the work being carried out to establish this zone.

On 5 August 1999 Kazakhstan became a full member of the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that the admission of Kazakhstan to membership of this prestigious international arms control and disarmament forum is a token of the international community's recognition of Kazakhstan's contribution to global disarmament and the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime, and of its active work to achieve and strengthen universal peace and security. Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to all delegations of States members of the Conference on Disarmament for their confidence.

In view of the current world situation, there is a growing need for a thorough examination of the place and role of conventional armed forces and weapons in the consolidation of peace and the maintenance of strategic stability. Kazakhstan believes that the process of radically reducing conventional weapons must be both regional and universal. The implementation of such a process will be equivalent to progress towards general and complete disarmament. In our view, transparency in the control and reduction of conventional weapons provides a good basis for preventing a destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region or an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. In this context, Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and considers it to be the most important component of such control. Since 1992 Kazakhstan has been providing information on a regular basis to the Register, and it considers that the task at hand is to ensure the broadest possible participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of this important instrument. We also support the proposal on the convening of an international conference on the question of illicit arms trafficking in all its aspects, no later than 2001.

We fully support the humanitarian orientation of the Ottawa Convention, whose goal is the complete elimination of those treacherous instruments of war, anti-personnel landmines. Kazakhstan is continuing to make its contribution to international efforts in this area, and strictly abides by the moratorium declared by the Government of Kazakhstan in August 1997 on the export of anti-personnel mines, including their re-export and transit. At the same time, in our view the movement for the complete prohibition of anti-personnel mines should be an ongoing, step-by-step process, based on the mine protocol of the Convention on inhumane weapons. The Conference on Disarmament must intensify its efforts to solve this problem.

Kazakhstan has consistently expressed its support for the creation of security structures in the Asian continent and is continuing its efforts to realize the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazerbaev, on the convening of a Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), first proposed from the rostrum of the General Assembly in 1992. The outcome of the multilateral talks and discussions within CICA was the holding on 14 September 1999 of a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of States members of the Conference and the signing of the Declaration of Principles Guiding Relations between CICA Member States. Thus for the first time in history the legal foundations of the Asian security system have been laid. We are grateful to all States participating in the CICA process for their support for our initiative and their genuine willingness to work together to build up an Asian security system. I should like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continuing interest in and support for Kazakhstan's initiative.

From the standpoint of ensuring security in our region we attach great importance to the holding, in August 1999, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, of a meeting of the Heads of State members of the Shanghai Five. The unique cooperation that was begun three years ago in Shanghai by five countries — Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan — on regional and global security, and the prevention and overcoming of crises on the Eurasian land mass, has demonstrated its vitality. The agreements concluded and ratified by the five States on questions of border regulation, confidence in military matters, and mutual reduction of armed forces in border regions, help to strengthen good-neighbourliness and friendship, and make a constructive contribution to ensuring security and stability in the Asian region.

In conclusion, I should like to express my great appreciation of the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. In our view, the Regional Centre is a useful instrument that can help to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The Centre is continuing to assist the five Central Asian States in drafting a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We hope that the Centre will continue its work and that it will receive the necessary assistance.

During its current session the First Committee will be adopting important decisions with a view to strengthening the non-proliferation regime and ensuring peace and security at the regional and global levels. The delegation of Kazakhstan is ready to strengthen its cooperation with other delegations in the First Committee in order to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Kuindwa (Kenya): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to your important post. We are confident that under your leadership the First Committee will successfully complete its work. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

This has been a particularly difficult year for disarmament. It has seen numerous developments which have not augured well for international security. Chief among these has been the continued recourse to arms as a means of conflict resolution. International peace and security has been shaken by such developments.

In our part of the world the ready availability of illicit small arms and light weapons continues to cause untold suffering and hardship. The situation in Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are cases in point. The report (A/54/258) of the Secretary-General on small arms, which was prepared as a result of resolution 52/38 J, confirmed the devastating use to which such arms have been put. These types of weapons have been used in armed conflicts, especially where the conflicts involved irregular troops. In that connection, we would like to recall resolution 53/77 B, which asked the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to curb the illicit flow of small arms in Africa, through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations.

In view of the extensive security threat posed by light weapons, Kenya looks forward to the conference on the illicit arms trade to be held by the year 2001, as envisaged in resolution 53/77 E. To that end, Kenya is currently exploring the possibility of organizing a conference on the issue of illicit small arms circulating in our subregion.

In Geneva the Conference on Disarmament has made no substantive progress in its work this year and has come to a complete standstill. This unfortunate situation resulted from disagreements on how to address two critical issues: nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is a well-known fact that nuclear weapons pose the greatest single danger to the entire spectrum of life on our planet. This notwithstanding, the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons are yet to take off. Indeed, existing stocks of nuclear weapons held by the nuclear-weapon States are enormous. It has been estimated by reputable disarmament research institutes that each of the two largest nuclear Powers has approximately 6,000 nuclear warheads, including various types of missiles launched from the air, land or sea, most of which are on an alert status. Their range is such that they can be deployed to strike at targets virtually anywhere on earth.

It has been pointed out repeatedly at different forums that nuclear weapons can only provide a false sense of security. While their massive potential for destruction reduces their real utility value, it is hard to imagine that they can be held in perpetuity and never used. One can only imagine the high cost of maintaining these weapons in their current status and ponder to what better uses such resources could be put. Realistically, the continued possession of such weapons by some States will drive others to also endeavour to acquire them. This is indeed a frightening scenario.

The balance sheet for nuclear disarmament is rather negative at a time when we are preparing for a major review of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to be carried out next year. Article VI of that Treaty commits all States parties to, *inter alia*, pursue in good faith negotiations towards nuclear disarmament at an early date. The role of the five nuclear-weapon States is particularly vital.

At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the five States, within the framework of the document entitled "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", reaffirmed their commitment to undertake nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT. They have repeatedly made this reaffirmation, including as recently as last month.

We are, however, disappointed that these reaffirmations seem to have become an end in themselves, as they have not been followed by any concrete steps. It is now almost 30 years since the NPT came into force, and it is almost five years since the five nuclear-weapon States renewed their commitment at the last NPT review conference to undertake nuclear disarmament in good faith. Yet during all that period movement towards such disarmament has been dismally slow.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks have stalled as a result of failure by one of the parties to ratify the START II Treaty. At its fiftieth summit in Washington in April this year the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reaffirmed its doctrine of nuclear sharing with its non-nuclear-Power partners. This act, of course, contravenes articles II and III of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This development was followed by the release by one country of a draft nuclear doctrine aimed at the development of land-, sea- and air-launched nuclear weapons.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Kenya considers that the two critical issues — nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space — should be seriously tackled by the Conference as a matter of priority. We hope that those member States of the Conference which have been opposed to the substantive discussion of the two issues will soon review their stand. That would help to get the Conference back on track and restore its credibility.

As for nuclear non-proliferation, the significance of two major treaties is at risk. Prospects for the 2000 NPT Review Conference were somewhat dimmed by the outcome of its third Preparatory Committee session in May this year. The Committee only managed to reach agreement on procedural issues, thus putting aside all substantive issues for the Review Conference itself.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to enter into force. That is because only 26 out of the 44 States whose ratification is mandatory for this purpose have so far ratified it. It is particularly disappointing that three of these States parties are nuclear-weapon States. Although we appreciate the efforts of the United States Administration in seeking ratification of the CTBT, it is disquieting that the United States Senate has rejected its ratification and put in serious jeopardy the very survival of the Treaty.

In a nutshell, nuclear disarmament is today in a state of disarray. All but one of the nuclear-weapon States seem to lack the political will to seriously undertake nuclear disarmament, be it at the Conference on Disarmament or under any other aegis.

The disarmament agenda has become rather skewed, because of the near total absence of tangible measures and effective action on nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon States. While the international community has successfully negotiated and adopted instruments prohibiting chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, it is disturbing that the nuclear-weapons area remains untouchable. In order to restore some balance in the disarmament agenda it is time for us to prepare the ground for an eventual instrument outlawing the use of nuclear weapons and banning their production, with a view to their eventual elimination.

On outer space, we consider that the prevention of an arms race is vital, as was reaffirmed in resolution 53/76 and similar earlier resolutions. The rapid pace of technological development in both space and military science in recent times has increased the prospect of the introduction of weapons into outer space. Each and every State represented here today has a border, so to speak, with outer space and therefore a legitimate interest in its well-being. That makes space a veritable common heritage for us all. It should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes; potentially destructive purposes, such as an arms race, are unacceptable.

We would like in this connection to commend the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for successfully organizing the Third United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space last July in Vienna. We urge the Secretary-General to favourably consider the recommendations of the Conference, in particular the one on assistance to developing countries, which is intended to enable them to develop their space capability.

In order to keep outer space clear of an arms race it is imperative to seal possible loopholes in the existing legal regime governing its use. Treaties such as the 1963 Partial Test-Ban Treaty and the 1967 outer space Treaty should be updated to *inter alia* take into account the rapidly evolving space technology, which has made outer space more readily accessible for potentially non-peaceful uses.

We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the Steering Group on Disarmament and Development. Among other things, it points out the devastating impact of civil conflicts on development all over the world. The destruction occasioned by these wars has led to an unfortunate situation whereby resources for development are increasingly being diverted to emergency and rehabilitation operations.

As is well known, Africa, a continent which is still grappling with the problems of poverty-eradication and development, has been seriously affected by wars which have led to the extensive destruction of infrastructure and

massive destabilization of populations. Huge amounts of resources are being spent on reconstruction rather than on development. There is, therefore, an urgent need for serious disarmament efforts in the continent, which brings into focus the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We are certain that the Regional Centre has the potential to play an important role in the promotion of peace and disarmament in Africa. We hope, therefore, that the Secretary-General will continue his efforts to revive it and endow it with adequate resources. We similarly hope that more donors will recognize the important role of the Centre and generously provide it with the assistance it so urgently needs.

On the subject of anti-personnel landmines, it is gratifying to note that the Ottawa Convention took effect on 1 March this year, followed later by the First Meeting of the States Parties in Maputo. We commend Mozambique for successfully hosting that meeting. The Convention is historic in the sense that it deals with all aspects of the landmine issue. The Ottawa Convention remains the only mechanism under which all issues pertaining to landmines should be addressed. We cannot afford the luxury of creating parallel mechanisms. The international community should instead intensify its efforts to universalize the treaty. We particularly urge those States which are major producers and users of anti-personnel landmines to adhere to the Convention at an early date. Kenya is a signatory to the Convention and is currently in the process of ratifying it.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that my delegation has raised only a few of the pressing issues on the Committee's agenda. We look forward to participating in the deliberations of the Committee on these and other issues.

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): On behalf of the Ugandan delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the Committee during this session of the General Assembly, and all other members of the Bureau. Be assured of our full support and cooperation.

Disarmament is crucial for the maintenance of international peace and security, which is the principal reason for the existence of the United Nations. Yet the nuclear arms race, with its attendant dangers, continues unabated on the eve of the new century, with a number of States still relying on more nuclear weapons for their national defence. At the same time, the nuclear-weapon States have themselves turned a deaf ear to the objectives and ideals of nuclear disarmament. In fact, they have become indifferent to any serious multilateral arrangements in current disarmament programmes. Our delegation believes this should not be the case, especially at this time.

It is also regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has once again failed to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Our delegation requests member States of the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations as soon as possible.

My delegation would like to add its voice to the call upon all Member States of the United Nations, especially those which have not yet signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to sign it without any further excuses. We also ask that the two major nuclear Powers, the Russian Federation and the United States, ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which they have signed. This we believe will be a sure way forward towards the desired goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Twenty-seven years ago the international community took a bold step in adopting a treaty banning the production and use of biological weapons. It is hoped that the ongoing negotiations on a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention will be concluded soon and that this category of weapons of mass destruction will also be more closely monitored.

Of particular concern to developing countries, and especially to my delegation, is the question of small arms and light weapons and the use of landmines. Small arms, light weapons and landmines have become major instruments in all armed conflicts all over the world. In Africa most armed conflicts are fought exclusively with small arms and light weapons. The degree of destruction and the loss of life and property as a result of these small arms is overwhelming. Of course, the Committee is familiar with the staggering statistics involving death, disability and destruction, all resulting from armed conflicts. We believe that the root causes of these conflicts should be addressed. Many conflicts result from the lack of social and economic development.

The long-term impact of the use of small arms, light weapons and landmines by child soldiers is yet to be fully assessed. What is clear and undisputed, however, is that a culture of violence has emerged and is intensifying. Educational systems have been disrupted, and a generation suffering from different traumas is emerging. In addition, enormous resources, amounting to billions of dollars, are wasted annually on the acquisition of small arms, light

weapons and landmines. These resources could be better utilized for social and economic development. It is therefore imperative, if sustainable peace and development is to be attained in Africa, that the control of small arms proliferation and a reduction in expenditures on arms be high on the security and development agenda.

My delegation therefore appeals to those 70 countries which manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons to review their trading practices to ensure that these dangerous weapons are not sold to non-State actors. In this regard, Uganda welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/54/258) on small arms and other initiatives at the regional and multilateral levels which aim at the control of small arms and light weapons. We appreciate in particular the practical measures taken to collect and destroy these weapons, such as those that have been undertaken by Mali, Albania and Liberia.

My delegation looks forward to the convening of an international conference to fully address the issue of the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, in the year 2001. We would, however, in the meantime hope that the international community will continue to provide the necessary assistance to all African countries to effectively address the problems that have been caused by the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms, light weapons and landmines in our continent and beyond.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by extending my delegation's warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your able leadership and vast experience will steer the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation with you and the Bureau in dealing with the important issues before the Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his introductory statement last Monday outlining the tasks before us and suggesting the direction we need to take.

In the aftermath of the cold war the international community has endeavoured to accelerate the process of multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in the field of weapons of mass destruction, with some progress. Over the past year, however, the process of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation has experienced unfortunate setbacks. We have witnessed a series of negative developments: the stalling of the START process; further nuclear testing; irresponsible missile firings; the failure to adopt a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament; and a delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Those developments underscore the importance of the current session of the First Committee in addressing squarely the wide range of pending issues with the objective of revitalizing and facilitating the multilateral process of global disarmament and non-proliferation at this crucial juncture.

As we stand in the twilight of the twentieth century we feel utterly frustrated to see that our generation, which invented and experimented with devastating nuclear weapons, has not been able to take any effective measures to get them under control before the century comes to a close. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was, and remains, the first and only such attempt by the international community to establish a global non-proliferation regime. However, last year's nuclear testings in South Asia dealt a serious blow to such efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free world and undermined the credibility and integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, continuing non-compliance with the NPT by some of the States parties to the Treaty has also damaged the non-proliferation regime. At the same time, growing concern has been voiced at the limited progress in the reduction of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

At this critical juncture the international community should pursue more vigorously, and as a highest priority, universal adherence to the NPT and full compliance with its provisions. We should also redouble our collective efforts so that the nuclear arms race in South Asia may be reversed and Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) may be fully implemented. We also wish to underline the importance of the universal application of the Additional Protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency's Safeguards Agreement.

It is unfortunate that the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the parties to the NPT, held last May, was not able to reach agreement on substantive recommendations. It is therefore imperative that the 2000 NPT Review Conference, being the first review conference since the indefinite extension of the NPT, prove to be a critical opportunity to renew our collective commitment to the NPT and to the strengthening of its regime. As a follow-up to

the 1995 decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty, the Review Conference should also serve to evaluate past achievements and identify areas where future progress could be made.

Nuclear disarmament is another priority. While appreciating the progress made so far in the reduction of nuclear weapons, we believe that nuclear-weapon States should demonstrate a greater willingness to turn words into action. We urge the revitalization of the START process through the earliest possible entry into force of START II and through an early commencement of START III negotiations. In this connection, we welcome the statement on 23 September 1999 by the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council in which they reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. We are also encouraged to note their stated willingness to contribute to the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference. We share the view that it is time to explore ways and means to enhance a multilateral exchange of information and views on progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament in the context of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is now universally recognized that the CTBT will significantly contribute to preventing the nuclear arms race. We welcome the Final Declaration adopted last week at the Vienna Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and call upon all States which have not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty, especially those whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, to do so at the earliest date possible. In particular, three States listed, which have not yet signed the Treaty, should respond immediately to the overwhelming call of the international community. My delegation takes this opportunity to inform the Committee that the Republic of Korea deposited its instrument of ratification of the Treaty on 24 September 1999. We join others in expressing profound disappointment at the inability of the United States Senate to ratify the Treaty. We sincerely hope that the United States, which has so far led international efforts to strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, will be able to continue to play such a leadership role by resolving the issue of CTBT ratification as soon as possible.

It is discouraging to note that negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) have not moved forward this year, despite the agreement to establish an ad hoc committee in 1998. We support the immediate commencement of those negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament as the next logical and practical step in our global nuclear non-proliferation effort. Moreover, we hope that, pending the completion of FMCT negotiations, all the States concerned will be able to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for military purposes.

In regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, we welcome the adoption at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission of the principles on the establishment of such zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. We hope that the letter and spirit of these principles will be respected and observed by all member States concerned.

My delegation appreciates the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which since its establishment has conducted inspections of chemical-weapons-related facilities around the world and destroyed thousands of tonnes of chemical agents in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. We call upon all those States which remain outside the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), especially major possessors of chemical weapons, to accede to the Convention at the earliest date possible.

The recent rapid developments in biotechnology make the prospect of biological weapons even more frightening. The important task of creating a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) should be tackled in a more serious and constructive manner by the international community so as to enable the Ad Hoc Group to conclude its negotiation for the protocol to the Convention in a spirit of compromise well before the fifth BWC Review Conference.

Strengthening existing disarmament agreements is no less important than producing new agreements. Indeed, non-acceptance of the existing norms by any country will set a bad precedent with regard to putting those norms in place and future disarmament initiatives. Attaining universality is indeed a cross-cutting issue pertaining to all internationally legally binding instruments, including the NPT, the CTBT, the CWC and the BWC. We are all aware that the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction have a universal impact, not limited to one country or one region. Moreover, the development of those weapons programmes will lead to the diversion of enormous financial resources away from the socio-economic development needs of those countries which require international assistance. The international community should therefore continue to make efforts to develop appropriate responses to ensure universal adherence

to all agreements related to eliminating weapons of mass destruction in a more vigorous and comprehensive manner.

Another important issue is control over the export of sensitive material, technology and equipment which can be used for the development of weapons of mass destruction. All exporting countries are called upon to exercise strong and effective control over the export of such sensitive material, technology and equipment to those high-risk proliferation countries which have not acceded to, and/or complied with, the relevant international treaties and agreements.

The proliferation of missiles as a means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction seriously undermines international peace and stability. The missile test launchings conducted in South Asia, the Middle East and North-East Asia caused consternation and triggered an increased awareness of, and concern over, the dangers of missile proliferation. In view of the fact that there are currently no international norms regulating the proliferation of long-range missiles, we concur with the Secretary-General's view on the need for multilaterally negotiated norms against the spread of ballistic missile technology for military purposes and for restraint in missile development. In addressing this issue, we believe that a step-by-step approach would be most practical, given the inherent complexities. We could begin perhaps by creating an expert group to study all aspects of the missile issue and ask the group to submit a report to the Committee.

We have seen, particularly in the post-cold-war era, that conventional weapons have a more destabilizing consequence in many situations from pre-conflict to post-conflict settings. In particular, the international community's concerns have heightened regarding the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which claim innocent lives, fuel further conflicts and impede post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation.

A series of actions by the Security Council this year, including the recent ministerial meeting devoted to small arms, highlighted the urgent need to tackle the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the adoption of the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission. We believe that the excessive accumulation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons could best be averted by a combination of reduction and preventive measures. We appreciate the regional initiatives to control small arms, especially in West Africa, Europe and South America, and hope that these efforts will be further strengthened. We also welcome weapons collection efforts organized by the United Nations. We support the convening of an international conference on the illicit trade in small arms in the year 2001, and believe that the recommendations in the report (A/54/258) of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms will be very helpful in preparing that conference.

On the issue of anti-personnel landmines, the past year has seen significant developments: the entry into force of amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention. My Government plans to accede to the CCW and its amended Protocol II in the very near future. We also support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the treaty banning the transfer of anti-personnel landmines. My Government has joined international efforts to minimize the inhumane consequences of anti-personnel landmines by taking a series of steps, such as extending indefinitely its export moratorium on anti-personnel landmines and continuing our financial contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

I turn now to the issue of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). The Republic of Korea is already on record as voicing its support for the convening of the special session. Indeed, since SSOD-III, held in 1988, there have been not only significant developments in the field of international non-proliferation and disarmament, but also notable changes in the international security environment. That is why we believe that it is time for us to review the most critical aspects of disarmament and chart our future course of action. It is our view that SSOD-IV should address past, present and future disarmament issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We hope that we can reach a consensus this time on the convening of SSOD-IV.

The international community has exerted strenuous efforts to bring North Korea into full compliance with the IAEA Safeguards Agreement. Unfortunately, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has so far failed to cooperate fully with the IAEA in implementing the Agreement. It is imperative that, as a State party to the NPT, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea implement the IAEA Safeguards Agreement fully and faithfully. The adoption without a vote at the General Conference of the IAEA two weeks ago of the resolution on the implementation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the Safeguards Agreement bears witness to the

repeated calls of the international community for full compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its Treaty obligations and for its cooperation with the IAEA.

The Geneva Agreed Framework has proved to be an important step forward in addressing North Korea's nuclear problem. Hence, my Government has faithfully fulfilled its commitment to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) by playing a central role in the organization's project of constructing light-water reactors in North Korea. We will continue to do so as long as North Korea lives up to the letter and spirit of the Agreed Framework. We also look forward to the early implementation of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed by the two Koreas in 1991.

The Republic of Korea, a staunch supporter of the global non-proliferation regime, has acceded to and faithfully complied with all major instruments related to weapons of mass destruction, such as the NPT, the CWC, the BWC and the CTBT. My Government holds to its firm commitment to the global non-proliferation regime, and hopes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will follow suit by joining the non-proliferation efforts of the international community and thus contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

As you, Mr. Chairman, so well articulated in your opening statement last Monday, it is the responsibility of our generation to carry forward the work to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". To this end, we need to redouble our efforts to create an international environment conducive to peace and stability in all corners of the world.

At the dawning of the new millennium, we must renew our collective commitment to forge a consensus in dealing with the arduous tasks of further enhancing disarmament and non-proliferation and instilling a culture of peace. I am confident that the Committee will do its best during the current session to meet these challenges for the benefit of peace and security for all mankind.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate this morning.

I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation to make a statement which I understand is not related to the general debate.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is disappointed by, and seriously concerned about, the refusal by the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This important international instrument is the result of many years of effort by many countries and is of prime importance to international security and stability, because it strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

At all stages of the Treaty's elaboration the Administration of the United States of America took a most active part, and it was the first to sign. This decision by the Senate of the United States of America is a serious blow to the entire system of agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We have drawn your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the statement by President Clinton to the effect that his Administration will observe the moratorium on the conducting of nuclear tests, which all five nuclear Powers are adhering to at this time. At the same time, in the situation which has emerged, Russia, while committed to the CTBT, feels bound to take most seriously into account the result of the Senate's decision regarding this Treaty for our own security and for stability throughout the world.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As Chairman, I too wish to make a brief statement, which I do with respect to all delegations and as neutrally as possible.

I had been advised by the secretariat that the statement by the Russian Federation would be of a procedural character relating to the Committee's work. From now on such statements will be accepted only within what the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly have established: the right of reply or other matters that have to do with the subject being dealt with, or in the context of the general debate. That is the only way in which we can maintain order in the general debate. We still have to hear many speakers who have statements to make that are important for the work of the Committee, and we shall hear everyone.

I am not giving an opinion as to the substance of the statement made by the Russian Federation, which it is its sovereign right to make; I am simply trying to ensure the minimum order, because otherwise there will be a series of statements which have nothing to do with the structure of the Committee's work.

I repeat that statements made in exercise of the right of reply or in accordance with other provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, or statements made in the context of the general debate, are permissible. As I have said, I was told that the statement would concern organizational problems.

In parenthesis, may I say that any suggestion relating to organizational matters will be very welcome to the Chair, because sometimes, as we say in my country, one cannot see the wood for the trees.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.